

# Children from older mothers more likely to have heart risks

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New research published in *The Journal of Physiology* demonstrates that adult offspring born to older mothers are more susceptible to heart risks in later life. These results could be crucial in developing preventative treatments for children born to older women.

Older motherhood is associated with an increased risk of complications during pregnancy with a greater likelihood of delivering a child that is premature or born small. As giving [birth](#) at an older age is becoming more common, it is important to understand the consequences for these children in adulthood.

The research, conducted by investigators at the University of Alberta, Canada, highlights the need for improved access to healthcare for [children](#) born to older mothers. It also suggests that intervention strategies should be tailored according to sex, as female offspring did not demonstrate the same susceptibility to [heart](#) problems or impaired blood vessels as [male offspring](#).

To investigate the impact of the age a mother gives birth on the health of her offspring, older female rats, which were equivalent to a 35-year-old human, were mated with young males. At 4 months, their offspring's blood vessel and heart function were tested. In future studies, the researchers will look into whether or not the findings are true in human subjects.

The principal investigator on the project, Sandra T Davidge, said: 'This

research is important because it improves our understanding of the impact of giving birth at an older age on the health of offspring in later life. We are further analysing the mechanisms that might be contributing to these adverse effects on the offspring of older [mothers](#), in particular focusing on the role of placental function.'

**More information:** Christy-Lynn M. Cooke et al, Increased susceptibility to cardiovascular disease in offspring born from dams of advanced maternal age, *The Journal of Physiology* (2018). [DOI: 10.1113/JP275472](#)

Provided by The Physiological Society

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